

I'm a Ruin by wonderwheelzier

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Summary:

Richie feels that he has hurt Mike enough, and convinces himself that making Mike leave him is the only way to spare Mike more pain and disappointment.

I'm a Ruin

Author's Note:

this is very sad and doesn't get happy, just a warning lol

also, this is told from Richie's POV, and as we know Richie Tozier hates himself a lot sometimes, so he blames himself for a lot of stuff, but I would just like to make it clear that addiction is a disease that many people go through, and it's something that can be different for different people. It's nothing to be ashamed of, and it does not make you a bad person. Recovery is always possible and happens at different speeds for different people.

(title from the song of the same title by Marina and the Diamonds)

Richie came home already exhausted. Work had been hell, and his entire body felt simultaneously like it was a live wire and full of cement. He was planning on bypassing Mike and heading straight for the bedroom to take a long fucking nap. However, he couldn't do that without walking through the living room, where Mike was standing with his arms crossed behind the coffee table, which had a bag of cocaine on it.

"You wanna explain this?" Richie rolled his eyes at the question. His head was already starting to pound from the sanctimonious tone his boyfriend had immediately broken into.

"It's powdered sugar, borrowed a cup from the neighbors," Richie grinned humorlessly as he headed for the bedroom.

"You're really just gonna walk away from me right now?" Mike's voice was strained, almost a screech, trying to sound indignant through the obvious pain he was feeling. Richie's shoulders sagged, his chest suddenly heavy. He hated hearing that pain in Mike's voice, he hated being a disappointment to him. Mike had only ever been

good to him, and he kept fucking up, kept proving to him that he didn't deserve Mike's signature undying faith. Richie turned to face Mike and shrugged weakly.

"I don't know what you want me to say," he sighed.

"I want you to throw it out," Mike said plainly. "Burn it, toss it in the Hudson, I don't fucking care how you do it, just get this shit out of my house."

"*Your* house?" Richie scoffed, a bitterly unamused grin on his face. "Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't realize your fan fiction and DnD campaigns were paying for this place." Mike always did this, always acted all high and mighty and made Richie feel like shit for needing a way to unwind or have a laugh from time to time. Richie knew that it came from a well-meaning place, that Mike was just trying to convince Richie to quit his bad habits, but the way he went about it kind of pissed Richie off. There was also the disappointment again, the reminder that Mike deserved better than Richie. Richie really didn't know why his boyfriend tried so hard; Richie clearly wore him down.

"Don't start that," Mike shook his head. "We both live here. We both pay rent and bills. If we get caught with this shit I'm taking the fall too. Don't you care about that? Don't you care what happens to me?" Richie rolled his eyes despite the guilt dragging his stomach down to his feet. Of course he cared, how could Mike not see that? And how could Mike not see what Richie *needed*? "We agreed you wouldn't bring this here anymore. I just don't understand why you'd lie to me."

"Because you never hear any fucking side other than your own!" Richie exploded. "We don't discuss, you just tell me what to do and assume I'll follow every order you give me!"

"Sorry, I didn't realize that 'Please don't bring illegal drugs into the house and then hide them from me, honey' was such a controversial request!" The hurt Richie was feeling must've shown, because Mike sighed, his anger fizzling out a bit. "I'm just worried, Rich. This clearly isn't just about having a good time every now and then. This keeps happening, and I think it's a serious problem."

“Why does it have to be a problem?” Richie challenged. “I’m functional. I shower and go to work and make money and eat food and drink water. I’m fine.”

“If you’re lying about it you know it’s wrong.”

“No, I know you think it’s wrong. That doesn’t make it wrong.”

“Are you happy without it?” Mike asked. His voice was so sincere, his eyes wide and brown and heartbroken. Mike was awful at hiding what he was feeling, so the sadness and pain in his voice and his eyes and his posture tore Richie up pretty bad. He hated himself for hurting Mike like that. It was selfish. But there were certain things Richie needed, and if those things hurt the ones he loved... then maybe the only way to stop hurting them was to leave them. But Richie had to make sure that wouldn’t hurt Mike, he had to make it Mike’s choice. He had to show Mike he wasn’t worth the effort or the pain he was putting himself through to stay with Richie.

“I can go without it,” was all he said, forcing an edge into his voice.

“Then why don’t you?” Richie was pleased to see that Mike was becoming irritated again. Good. He wanted Mike to see that he was better off without Richie dragging him down.

“Because I like it. That’s who I am, Mike,” Richie said helplessly, deflated. “You can take it or leave it, but stop trying to change it.”

“I don’t see why you wouldn’t want to change it! You can get better, Richie. I can help you get better.” Mike put a hand on Richie’s shoulder, which Richie shrugged off with an exasperated groan.

“I’m not something for you to fucking *fix*, okay? I know you wanna fix everything that you don’t like, but you can’t fix me! You can’t fix people!”

“Oh, I’m so sorry for wanting you help you,” Mike replied snidely.

“You don’t wanna help me, all you’re worried about is having a perfect boyfriend, or working on me like I’m a project to be accomplished and finished so you can feel good about yourself. When are you gonna realize that I’m not a project? I’m a fucking person,

and I'm never gonna be the person you want me to be."

"I don't treat people like projects!" Mike said defensively, his arms crossed.

"Yes, you do! You always have! You did the same thing to El and Will!" Richie watched all of the momentum of Mike's anger drain from his body at Richie's accusation. It made his blood run cold, the way Mike clenched his jaw, but he knew he was doing the right thing. Even if it felt awful for both of them, it was for the best in the long run.

"This isn't about El or Will," Mike said, his voice low and strained, trying to be measured. Richie felt a pang in his chest; he wondered if Mike had ever loved him as much as he clearly still loved both of them. "This is about you—"

"Do you think that's why they both left you?" Richie urged on, stepping closer into Mike's space. "Do you think they got sick of being your little projects?" Richie's stomach dropped as he saw Mike's lower lip start to quiver. No, he thought, *nonononono*. He could deal with Mike angry, he *wanted* him angry, but he couldn't deal with tears. There was no way Richie could just stand there and watch him cry, he couldn't walk away from that.

Thankfully, Mike's misty eyes steeled then, and the coldness in them strengthened the coldness in Richie's own chest. "I know that this," Mike said, looking Richie up and down, almost in disgust, "is why Eddie left you." And yeah, that hurt, but it was exactly what Richie needed to hear. And he was so glad Mike said it. It was the final push he needed to really walk away, to really push Mike far enough way that he could stop hurting him. "Maybe he had the right idea. He seems pretty happy these days."

"Then leave," Richie replied, his voice deep, almost threatening. None of the pain that was aching in every bone in his body showed through. "Fucking leave if you think it'll make you happy. I don't need your goddamn pity." He swallowed thickly before forcing himself to say, "I don't need you." And god, the lie tasted bitter on his tongue, but Richie knew he would do anything he had to in order to save Mike the pain and disappointment.

Mike looked at Richie like he had slapped him. He wrapped his arms around himself as his lips quivered, searching for the right words. "Do you want me?" he asked eventually, his voice trembling. Richie clenched his jaw; he focused on the tears welling in Mike's eyes, on the way he curled in on himself, as if he was afraid to be so close to Richie. He reminded himself that he did that, that he would continue to do that if he tried to make things better, if he kept holding onto someone he would only drag down.

"Not if you're gonna try to control me like this," he forced himself to say, his stomach churning at how easy and true he was able to make the words sound.

"You don't mean that," Mike said, shaking his head, his voice as thin as air.

"I do." Richie's heart sunk to his feet; he couldn't help imagining a reality where he was saying that at an altar, where Mike still had tears in his eyes but a smile on his face.

The dam broke then, and Mike's tears flowed freely. His body wracked with sobs, but he stayed put, not moving in any direction but further into himself. Richie couldn't take that.

"Baby," he whispered, taking a step toward Mike and reaching to pull him in.

"*Baby?*" Mike exploded, smacking Richie's arm away as his head whipped up in fury. "Are you fucking kidding me right now? You're breaking up with me for, for fucking *drugs*, and you're trying to comfort me? You just told me you don't want me and now you're calling me baby?" Richie's mouth opened and closed silently, the only part of his body he could move as the pain and anger and heartbreak in Mike's watery eyes struck him like daggers. He grabbed the bag from the table and nearly threw it at Richie as he shoved him in the chest. "Fuck you. You can have this, since it makes you so much happier than I do." Richie flinched. Mike stormed away toward the bedroom, shouting over his shoulder as he went. "I hope you shove it up your ass!" Mike slammed the bedroom door then, not giving Richie room to reply even if he could've thought of something to say.

Richie left the bag on the floor and collapsed onto the couch. He leaned forward, his elbows resting on his knees, one of which was bouncing incessantly. He eyed the bag, which sat on the floor where it had fallen at his feet. He hated how much he wanted to get his credit card out just then, how badly he wanted to feel that rush, to ignore all the bad feelings clawing at his heart. He just needed a distraction, needed to stop feeling the way he did. He heard muffled banging and talking coming from down the hall. He lay back on the couch, staring at the ceiling and picking at his hangnails. He resolved to not look at the bag while Mike was still home, but its very presence weighed down on his chest, had him itching for it. He'd been saving it for his day off, when Mike would be at work, but it sounded like he was gonna have the house to himself a lot sooner than that. *Good*, he thought, but he didn't feel good at all.

Richie really didn't know how much time had passed by the time Mike came storming out of the bedroom and began making a racket in the bathroom. A few minutes later he burst back into the living room, a nearly bursting backpack over one shoulder and a duffel bag over the other. Richie's chest seized at the sight. He sat up, but didn't move from the couch. "Going somewhere?" he asked, his voice rough. Mike turned to him, his face splotchy and eyes red.

"I'm gonna go stay with Nancy and Jonathan," he said, his voice raw but steady. Richie blinked, trying to hold himself together.

"For how long?" His voice sounded much stronger than he felt, almost uncaring. He sounded like an asshole, which he supposed was appropriate.

"Until I find my own place, I guess," Mike shrugged. Richie felt like he turned to stone just then. Mike looked at him then, and his eyes said it all. His wide, brown, red rimmed eyes. They were near pleading, and in that moment Richie knew Mike was giving him one last chance. Richie just had to get rid of the bag, he just had to swear it off. If he asked Mike to stay he would.

But he couldn't do that to Mike. He loved him too much.

"Think there's anything in your price range?" he smirked. "Or are you gonna have daddy pay for it?" He saw fire try to flash behind

Mike's eyes, but it died almost immediately. He shook his head, tired and disappointed in a way that made Richie want to melt into the floor.

"I really hope you get better, Richie." He looked around the living room for a moment before finally meeting Richie's eyes. "I really did love you."

That nearly broke Richie. He screamed at himself internally in the breathless moment Mike took before turning toward the door. *Don't let him walk out that door*, he told himself. *Don't let him go. You know you need him, you love him. Get on your fucking knees, beg, burn that shit, anything you have to do, just don't let him leave you.* Then, one silent plea to Mike before the door closed, *Please don't leave me.*

Then he was gone.

Richie swallowed thickly. He thought he should feel tears, thought he should be crying, but he just felt a bone-deep, aching emptiness. He sighed and eyed the bag on the floor. He cleared the table and got his credit card out.

Author's Note:

I know this ending was very bleak and not promising, but that's just because it's a small snippet of this (fictional) universe. Like I said before, recovery is always possible! Help is out there, and it's okay if it takes some people longer than others to get better.